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NEWS — GOVERNMENT — BUSINESS

New commercial fee allows businesses to recycle in town

CHRIS STEVENS | CORRESPONDENT

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While local businesses can soon recycle at the Transfer Station, there are still some worries about the current fee. However, town officials are looking at ways to lower the $155 per ton fee. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY

Local businesses can now recycle in town after the Select Board commercial recycling fee at $155 per ton.

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“This would be a break-even rate for the town,” said Transfer Station Coordinator Nicholas Parlee in a memo to the board.

The rate will only run through June 30, ending with the fiscal year when the program would be revisited with an eye on the new fiscal year and bettering the program for users.

“This gives us some time to understand how much volume we’re going to get and how to use it,” Parlee told the Select Board during its April 1 meeting. “This isn’t something that we’ve done before. This was part of the transportation renovation project that’s recently been completed.”

Parlee said under the new program, commercial customers would be able to tip a truck, dump a truck into a compactor and the $155 fee would break even with the town’s haul cost and recycling processing costs.

Select Board member John Fallon asked how the fee stacked up against other communities and Parlee admitted, not well. He said the town is locked into what it’s paying contractually right now, which likely puts the rate higher than other communities. However, Parlee also said the town currently has a Request for Proposals out for recycling services, which could lower the fee.

Parlee said the only issue they might face in seeking a lower fee is that most recycling haulers and processors are moving toward a variable rate scale, rates that fluctuate month to month. That is where they might find an average rate of $70 per ton, when it’s played out over the course of a year, he said.

“Towns usually don’t like that, and they push back and try to get a fixed rate,” Parlee said, adding that a fixed rate comes with certain pro

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"But we'll see where it goes. We've bid out with both fixed and variable rates."

Select Board member Anthea Brady pointed out what seemed to be a fairly large gap between the commercial rate and the recycling rate and asked if that was typical. Parlee said it is. He added the town is currently charging commercial vendors $175/ton for bagged waste and bagged waste is higher than recycling.

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Thoughts

One local businessman said he came to the meeting just to listen, but when given the opportunity to speak on the commercial program said, "I don't mind telling you I think it's a great idea." However, he wondered if there was enough incentive for newer businesses to take advantage of it.

Businesses have been forced to recycle out of town for about nine years and for those businesses that have never known any difference, he's not sure that being able to dump a whole truck for $155/ton versus recycling for $175 for bagged recycling is going to make a difference to them.

"We say $25 difference, what's wrong with that? But, they've got to change their whole system when you're not used to loading a truck and bringing it in and dumping it," he said. "But overall, I'm very grateful for the program and it's certainly got to start somewhere whether this is exactly right, or not, we'll see. But it's a move in the right direction."

Parlee noted again that he would have a new recycling rate, commercial rate and a new haul rate for the town come July 1 and he would b coming back before the board a few months after Town Meeting

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proposals. He also said they are looking at several grants that could potentially drive down recycling costs.

"Great," said Select Board Chair Michelle Prior. "I look forward to hearing about that and speak that to the universe while you're at it, OK."

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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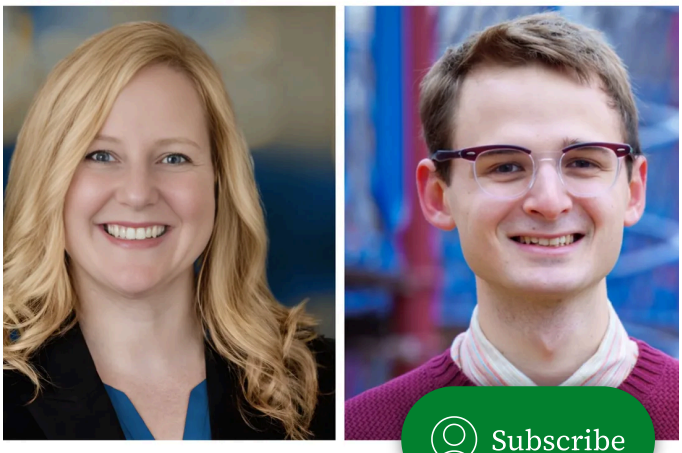

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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